

THE EVENING STAR-18 NOV 55

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over file

Rescuers to Fly To AF Wreck

Transport With 14 Crashes in Nevada

LAS VEGAS, Nev., Nov. 18 (AP).—An Air Force transport with 14 persons aboard crashed high in the Charleston Mountains while en route to the Nevada atomic bombing range yesterday.

An Arctic rescue team from March Air Force Base, Calif., braving subzero temperatures, climbed on foot through the snow early today in an attempt to reach the wreckage at about the 9,000-foot elevation. The team of four included two parachute-jumping medical specialists.

At dawn a March AFB two-engine amphibian rescue plane was due to take off from nearby Nellis AFB to drop a paramedic if the terrain and weather permitted.

The rugged range in the high plateau country was shrouded in clouds and whipped by high winds and intermittent snow.

Sighted on High Slope

The wreckage, sighted by search planes through a rift in the clouds yesterday, lay on a high slope next to 11,910-foot Mount Charleston, 27 miles northwest of here.

The aircraft was due at Groom Dry Lake, 50 miles north of the AEC's Camp Mercury, after leaving Burbank, Calif., 225 miles southwest of here.

Air Force headquarters in Washington, D. C., said the aircraft, believed to be a C54, carried Air Force personnel and "some civilian consultants." It was not disclosed how many of each. The Air Force described the mission as "routine."

Took Off From Burbank

An AEC spokesman in Albuquerque, N. Mex., said the AEC had no embargo on information about the crash and had no special interest in it, indicating that no atomic scientists were aboard.

A Nellis spokesman said the transport took off from Burbank shortly after 8 a.m. (PST) yesterday and routine radio contact was made with Nellis after 9 a.m. That was the last heard from the plane. An unidentified man at Nellis rest camp on Mount Charleston reported hearing a crash about 10.

A Nellis officer said there are several wrecks of airplanes in the range. However, as soon as a new wreck is found it is painted with yellow paint for identification from the air. The wreckage sighted yesterday bore no yellow paint.